

Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF)

The MAGTF is the Marine Corps' principle organization for conducting missions across the spectrum of military operations. MAGTFs provide combatant commanders or joint task force commanders with scalable, versatile expeditionary forces able to respond to a broad range of crisis and conflict situations. They are balanced, combined-arms force packages containing organic command, ground, aviation, and sustainment elements. A single commander leads and coordinates this combined-arms team from peacetime training through deployment. MAGTF teams live and train together, further increasing their cohesion and fighting power.

MAGTF Capabilities

The naval character of MAGTFs enhances their global mobility, lethality, and staying power. Embarked aboard amphibious ships, forward-deployed MAGTFs provide U.S. civilian and military leaders with the ability to do the following:

Move forces into crisis areas without revealing their exact destinations or intentions;

Provide continuous presence from secure sea bases in international waters;

Provide immediate national response in support of humanitarian and natural-disaster relief operations;

Provide credible but non-provocative combat power over-the-horizon of a potential adversary for rapid employment as the initial response to crisis;

Support diplomatic processes for peaceful crisis-resolution before employing immediate response combat forces;

Project measured degrees of combat power ashore—at night and under adverse weather conditions, if required;

Introduce additional forces sequentially into a theater of operations;

Operate independent of established airfields, basing agreements, and over-flight rights;

Conduct combat operations ashore, using inherent combat service support that is brought into the theater of operations;

Enable the introductions of follow-on MAGTF or joint and/or combined forces by securing staging areas ashore;

Operate in rural and urban environments, and during hostile nuclear, biological, and chemical situations;

Withdraw rapidly at the conclusion of operations or remain to help restore stability to the affected areas; and,

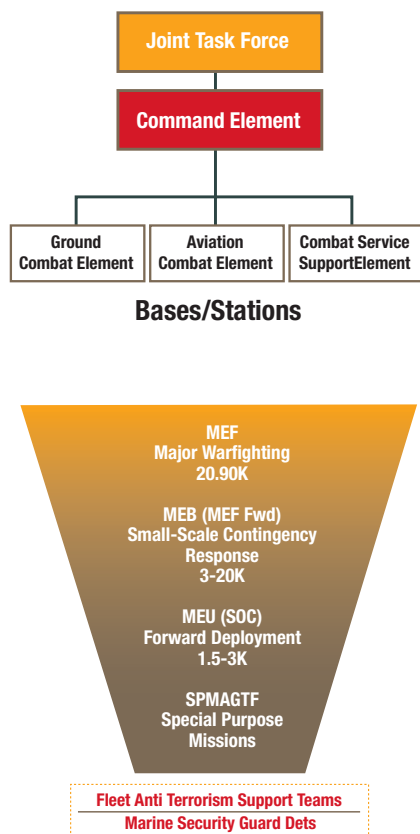
Plan and commence execution of a mission within six to 48 hours of receiving a warning order.

Along with the MAGTF, other special-purpose forces introduce additional depth to Marine Corps capabilities in support of joint operations.

MAGTF Composition

The Marine Corps task-organizes for combat in accordance with its statutory mandate to "...provide forces of combined arms, including aviation..." by forming integrated, combined-arms MAGTFs. As the name indicates, MAGTFs are task-organized and specifically tailored by mission, as well as for rapid deployment by air and/or sea. However, no matter what their mission or mode of deployment, MAGTFs are comprised of four deployable elements,

Marine Air-Ground Task Force - MAGTF



supported by the fifth element—our bases and stations.

Command Element (CE): The CE contains the MAGTF headquarters and other units that provide intelligence, communications, and administrative support. As with all other elements of the MAGTF, the CE is scalable and task-organized to provide the command, control, communications, computers, intelligence (C4I), and joint interoperability necessary for effective planning and execution of operations.

Ground Combat Element (GCE): The GCE is task-organized to conduct ground operations to support the MAGTF mission. This element includes infantry, artillery, reconnaissance, armor, light armor, assault amphibian, engineer, and other forces, as needed. The GCE can vary in size and composition. It can consist of a light, air-transportable battalion; a relatively heavy and mechanized unit that includes one or more Marine, Army, or allied divisions; or, another type of Marine Corps ground combat unit that meets the demands of a particular mission.

Aviation Combat Element (ACE): The ACE conducts offensive and defensive air operations and is task-organized to perform those functions of Marine aviation required to support the MAGTF mission. This element is formed around an aviation headquarters with appropriate air-control agencies, combat, combat support, and combat service support units. The ACE can vary in size and composition from an aviation detachment of specifically required aircraft to one or more Marine Aircraft Wings (MAWs).

Combat Service Support Element (CSSE): The CSSE is task-organized to provide the full range of combat service support functions and capabilities necessary to maintain the continued readiness and sustainability of the MAGTF as a whole. It is formed around a combat service support headquarters and may vary in size and composition from a support detachment to one or more Force Service Support Groups (FSSGs).

Types of MAGTFs

Four types of MAGTFs can be task-organized as follows: the Marine

Expeditionary Force, Marine Expeditionary Brigade, Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable), and Special Purpose.

Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF):

The MEF is the principal Marine Corps warfighting organization, particularly during larger crises or contingencies. It is normally commanded by a lieutenant general. A MEF can range in size from less than one to multiple divisions and aircraft wings, together with one or more FSSGs. Equipped with 60 days of supplies, MEFs are capable of both amphibious operations and sustained operations ashore in any geographic environment. With appropriate augmentation, the MEF command element is capable of performing as a Joint Task Force (JTF) headquarters.

MEFs are the primary “standing MAGTFs” that exist in peacetime, as well as wartime. Currently, the Marine Corps is organized with three standing MEFs, each with a Marine Division (MARDIV), MAW, and FSSG. The 1st Marine Expeditionary Force (I MEF) is located at bases in California and Arizona. The 2nd Marine Expeditionary Force (II MEF) is located at bases in North Carolina and South Carolina. The 3rd Marine Expeditionary Force (III MEF) is based in Okinawa, mainland Japan, and Hawaii.

MEFs remain the “cradles” or “reservoirs” from which all other Marine Corps capabilities emanate. Marine component headquarters, MARFORLANT or MARFORPAC, may form smaller MAGTFs from these MEFs. A MEF will normally deploy in echelon and will designate its lead element as the MEF (Forward).

Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB):

The MEB is the mid-sized MAGTF (up to 20,000 Marines) that is normally commanded by a brigadier general. The MEB provides transitional capability between the forward-deployed MEU and the MEF, which is our principal warfighting force. A reinforced infantry regiment, a composite Marine Aircraft Group (MAG), and a Brigade Service Support Group (BSSG) will comprise a notional MEB. The command element of the MEB is embedded within the command element of its parent MEF; the deputy MEF commander serves as the MEB commander.

MEBs provide supported combatant commanders with a scalable, warfighting capability across the spectrum of military operations. As an expeditionary force, it is capable of rapid deployment and employment via amphibious shipping (normally 15 amphibious ships, including five large-deck amphibious assault ships), strategic air/sea-lift, geographic or maritime propositioning force assets, or any combination thereof. With 30 days of accompanying supplies, MEBs can conduct amphibious assault and sustained operations ashore in any geographic environment.

A MEB can operate independently or serve as the forward echelon of a MEF. With additional MEF Command Element augmentation, a MEB is also capable of acting as a JTF headquarters. Currently, the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd MEB Command Elements are embedded within the CEs of I, II, and III MEF, respectively.

Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable), or MEU(SOC):

Forward-deployed MEU(SOC)s embarked

aboard Expeditionary Strike Groups (ESGs) operate continuously in the areas of responsibility of various unified combatant commanders. These units provide the President and the unified combatant commanders with forward-deployed units that can conduct a variety of quick reaction, sea-based, crisis-response options in either a conventional amphibious/expeditionary role or in the execution of maritime special operations. The MEU is commanded by a colonel and deploys with 15 days of accompanying supplies.

Prior to deployment, a MEU undergoes an intensive six-month training program, focusing on its conventional and selected maritime special operations missions. The training culminates with a thorough evaluation and certification as "Special Operations Capable." In addition to possessing conventional capabilities, MEU(SOC)s are augmented with selected detachments to provide enhanced capabilities. These special capabilities include:

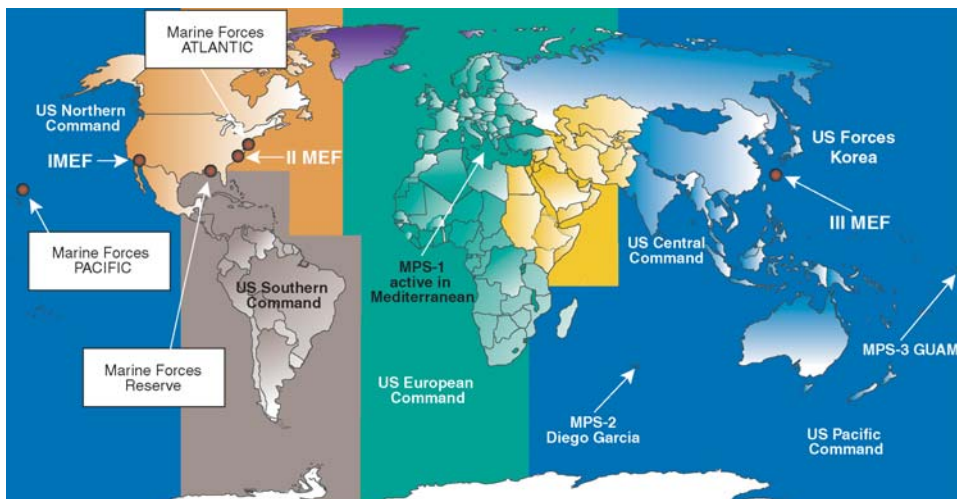
- Amphibious operations;
- Direct action;
- Tactical recovery of aircraft and personnel;
- Intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance;
- Airfield/port seizure;
- Non-combatant evacuations;
- Humanitarian aid/disaster relief; and,
- Supporting arms coordination.

COMMARFORLANT and COMMARFORPAC routinely maintain forward-deployed MEU(SOC)s in the Mediterranean, Arabian Gulf, and Pacific regions.

Special Purpose MAGTF (SPMAGTF):

A SPMAGTF is task-organized to accomplish a specific mission, operation, or regionally focused exercise. As such, SPMAGTFs can be organized, trained, and equipped to conduct a wide variety of expeditionary operations, ranging from crisis-response to training exercises and

Locations of MEFS, Maritime Prepositioning Squadrons, and MARFORS



peacetime missions. They are designated as SPMAGTF with a mission, location, or exercise name, for example, “SPMAGTF (X),” “SPMAGTF Somalia,” “SPMAGTF UNITAS,” or “SPMAGTF Dade County.” Their duties cover the spectrum from non-combatant evacuation to disaster relief and humanitarian missions.

MAGTF Sustainability

A fundamental characteristic of a MAGTF is its ability to operate for extended periods as an expeditionary force, relying on internal resources for sustainment. All MAGTFs have inherent sustainability that allows them to be self-sufficient for planned periods. Larger MAGTFs have a deeper, broader, and more capable organic support capability. Different-sized MAGTFs deploy with sufficient accompanying supplies to support joint operations.

MAGTFs can augment their organic sustainability by using external support from Navy organizations, host nation support (HNS) agreements, inter-service support agreements (ISSAs), and in-theater cross-service support.

Maritime Prepositioning Force (MPF)

The Maritime Prepositioning Force is a strategic power-projection capability that combines the lift capacity, flexibility, and responsiveness of surface ships with the speed of strategic airlift. Strategically positioned around the globe, MPFs provide unified combatant commanders with forward presence and rapid crisis-response. MPF ships are organized into three Maritime Prepositioning Ships Squadrons (MPSRONS): MPSRON-1, based in the Mediterranean; MPSRON-2, based at

Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean; and, MPSRON-3, based in the Guam-Saipan area. The MPF is interoperable and flexible, able to support any size MAGTF—from a MEU to MEF—employing anywhere from one to all 16 ships.

When needed, these ships move to a crisis region and offload either in port or in-stream. Offloaded equipment and supplies are then married up with Marines arriving at nearby airfields. The end result is a combat-ready Marine Air-Ground Task Force rapidly established ashore, using minimal reception facilities. MPF is especially responsive to regional crises that involve humanitarian assistance and disaster relief. MPFs provide enough equipment and supplies to support a MAGTF (a MEB is standard for MPF support) for its first 30 days of operations.

MAGTF deployment planning and training is conducted by the Commanding Generals, II MEF (MPSRON 1); I MEF (MPSRON 2); and III MEF (MPSRON 3). The Commander, Marine Corps Logistics Base, Albany, GA, is responsible for obtaining, prepositioning, and maintaining Marine Corps supplies and equipment for each MPSRON. This is accomplished in conjunction with the MEFs through a maintenance cycle program conducted at the Blount Island facility in Jacksonville, FL. The MPF ships are civilian-owned and operated under long-term charters to the Military Sealift Command (MSC).

Unique Unified Commander Support

A combatant commander or subordinate joint force commander may also require Marine forces that do not possess all elements of a MAGTF. These forces are

not given a MAGTF designation. Examples are installation security forces, engineer and medical support teams for humanitarian operations, deployments for training, law enforcement operations, and mobile training teams. In these cases, forces will be designated by the name of the senior headquarters having operational control, for example, 1st Combat Engineer Battalion (Rein), 1st Marine Division.

Other Special-Purpose Marine Corps Forces

The MAGTFs discussed above provide a continuum of capabilities to support naval, unified combatant commander, and national requirements. These MAGTFs are joined by other unique Marine forces to help the Corps deal with a full range of conventional and unconventional threats and assignments.

4th Marine Expeditionary Brigade (Anti-Terrorism)

In September 2001, the Marine Corps reactivated the 4th MEB as an anti-terrorism (AT) organization within Marine Corps Forces, Atlantic. The 4th MEB (AT) provides unified combatant commanders with specialized anti-terrorism forces that are rapidly deployable and sustainable. Its mission is to deter, detect, and defend against terrorist threats worldwide, and conduct an initial response to a chemical or biological incident.

The 4th MEB (AT) is organized around the Marine Corps Security Force Battalion; Marine Security Guard Battalion; Chemical Biological Incident Response Force (CBIRF); and, Anti-Terrorism Battalion. The CBIRF is capable of rapid response to

chemical or biological threats. Should an incident occur, CBIRF would immediately deploy to the affected site and provide a number of significant capabilities. These include the ability to coordinate initial relief efforts, to physically secure the incident site, to detect and identify chemical and biological agents, to provide expert medical advice, and to provide limited decontamination of personnel and equipment.

The Marine Corps Security Force Battalion provides training for armed anti-terrorism and physical security personnel who will serve at high-value naval installations or units. The battalion maintains a worldwide presence at different locations, ranging from Keflavik, Iceland, to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, to Bahrain in the Arabian Gulf. These Marines protect key naval assets, including strategic weapons, command-and-control facilities, and naval support activities. In addition, the Security Force Battalion maintains two Fleet Anti-terrorism Security Team (FAST) companies for deployment as directed by the Commander, USJFCOM. The Marines of Marine Corps Security Force Battalion may also “perform other functions as directed” by the Commander, USJFCOM.

The two other elements of the 4th MEB (AT) play key roles, as well. Marine Security Guards provide security services to selected Department of State Foreign Service posts to prevent the compromise of classified material and equipment, and protect U.S. citizens and government property. The Anti-Terrorism Battalion focuses on the training of specialized skills through courses such as Urban Assault Climber and

Enhanced Marksmanship, as well as advanced security techniques and weapon skills.

Air Contingency Forces

Both COMMARFORPAC and COMMARFORLANT maintain Air Contingency MAGTFs (ACM) in a continuous state of readiness. ACMs are air-deployable forces available to the unified combatant commanders, whose lead elements are prepared to deploy on short notice. The ACMs provide great versatility in that they can be used as part of the fly-in echelon of a MPF, as reinforcement for an amphibious force, or as the lead element of a MEF.

The ACM will be task-organized to meet the mission, the threat, and airlift availability. The size of the GCE can range from a reinforced rifle company plus a battalion headquarters element, to a regimental-size force consisting of a regimental headquarters, two infantry battalions, a two-battery artillery battalion, a two-platoon reconnaissance company, a two-platoon engineer company, and appropriate aviation and combat service support elements.

Norway Prepositioning Program

Similar in concept to the MPF but land-based, this program currently stores supplies and combat equipment at secure locations in Norway for an airlifted force. Forward positioning of equipment reduces both reaction time and additional airlift requirements.

Supporting Establishment

Marine Corps bases and stations, often referred to as the 5th element of the

MAGTF, consist of those personnel, bases, and activities that support the Marine Corps' operating forces. This infrastructure consists primarily of 15 major bases and stations in the United States and Japan, as well as the personnel, equipment, and facilities required to operate them.

The supporting establishment also includes the Marine Corps Recruiting Command, Marine Corps Combat Development Command, and Marine Corps Logistics Command, as well as all training activities and formal schools. Additionally, the establishment includes those civilian activities and agencies that support the Marine Forces.

Marine Corps Total Force

There is a direct relationship between the size of the Marine Corps and the contribution made to our national defense. Large-scale deployments, operations, and training exercises with allies are part of our training and presence requirements in peacetime. A large percentage of our operating forces are forward-deployed in support of the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT), operations in the Arabian Gulf, and many other U.S. efforts and commitments. This has led to a high-deployment tempo and the demand for a sufficient rotation base back in the United States. This requirement will likely continue for the foreseeable future.